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ABSTRACT

This guide for the foreign language methods course is organized in the form of answers to seven questions that the methods teacher might ask about available resources. The first part is an annotated list of texts covering theory, techniques, testing, linguistics and individualized instruction. The second section considers the role of the basic text and of activities that may be incorporated into the class to supplement it. The activities discussed are lectures, discussion, demonstrations, student contributions, additional readings, assignments, projects, guest speakers, films, micro teaching, simulation, role playing, samples of student work from previous years, and language textbooks. The remainder of the paper deals with other resources available to the instructor and students: reference works, journals, bibliographies, sample materials, audio-visual materials, consultation services, meetings and local resource people. The knowledge needed by an applied linguist-methodologist requires an enormous depth and breadth of information. This guide is presented as an aid for the instructor who might need to know sources of available resources and indications about their usefulness. (Author/AMH)

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ABSTRACT

What Resources Are Available to the Methods Teacher?

The author first lists commonly-used methods texts including texts in the areas of testing, linguistics, and individualized instruction. This list is followed by a discussion of the role of the basic text in the methods class and of other productive activities that may be incorporated into the class to supplement, clarify, apply, and expand the content of the text. The remainder of the paper deals with other resources available to the instructor and students--reference works, journals, bibliographies, sample materials, textbooks, audio-visual materials, consultation services, meetings, and local resource people.

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Resources for the Methods Course

I. What texts are available for the methods course?

A. Basic Texts

1. Brooks, N. 1964. Language and Language Learning: Theory and Practice 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
Brooks presents the basic tenets of the audio-lingual approach.

2. Chastain, K. 1976. Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice 2nd ed. Chicago: Rand McNally.
Chastain contrasts conditioning and cognitive approaches to second-language teaching as a means of promoting individual teacher competency.

3. Cattegno, C. 1972. Teaching Foreign Languages in Schools: The Silent Way 2nd ed. New York: Educational Solutions.
Cattegno recommends an approach in which the stress is on student perception as a basis for developing language knowledge and skills.

4. Grittner, F. 1977. Teaching Foreign Languages 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row.
Grittner gives a general, easily read overview of foreign-language teaching.

5. Nester, R. ed. 1970. Teaching a Living Language. New York: Harper and Row.
The authors describe and support the verbal-active, or rationalist direct method, of teaching foreign languages.

6. Rivers, W. 1968. Teaching Foreign-Language Skills. (2nd ed. in preparation) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Rivers states that her purpose is to prepare the reader for a "foreign-language teaching careeer", not to provide specific classroom techniques.

B. Techniques

1. Allen, E. D., and Valette, R. M. 1977 Modern Language Classroom Techniques: A Handbook 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Allen and Valette supply the F-L teacher with an extensive list of classroom activities in all areas of F-L teaching.

2. Paulston, C. and Bruder, M. 1976. Teaching English as a Second Language: Techniques and Procedures. Englewood Cliffs: Winthrop.
Paulston and Bruder also give the F-L teacher an extensive list of classroom activities that they have found to be valuable.

C. Combination of Basic Text and Techniques

1. Rivers, W. et al. 1976. A Practical Guide to the Teaching of French (German, Spanish, and English). New York: Oxford University Press.
Rivers not only introduces some theory with her description of a variety of exercises and activities but also examines their strenghts and weaknesses.

D. Testing

1. Clark, J. L. D. 1972. Foreign Language Testing: Theory and Practice. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
   Clark focuses on the bases for prognostic testing, achievement testing, proficiency testing, and knowledge testing in the classroom.

2. Harris, D. P. 1969. Testing English as a Second Language. New York: McGraw-Hill.
   Harris provides a general, easily read overview of classroom testing , from preparation of specific types of items to "characteristics of a good test".

3. Valette, R. M. 1977. Modern Language Testing: A Handbook 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.
   Valette supplies the F-L teacher with an extensive list of test items in the various aspects of second-language acquisition.

E. Linguistics

1. Allen, J. P. B. and Corder, S. P., eds. 1975. The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics. London: Oxford University Press.
   In this three-volume series the editors have covered a wide range of areas of concern and interest to applied linguists and F-L teachers.
2. Politzer, R. L. 1972. Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development.
   Politzer discusses structural descriptive linguistics, transformational generative grammar, and contrastive analysis and examines the type of drill or exercise that is consistent with each.

F. Individualized Instruction

1. Disick, R. J. 1975. Individualizing Language Instruction. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
   Disick's balanced discussion of individualizing includes three parts: (1) philosophical and ideological bases, (2) program management, and (3) specific techniques.

2. Grittner, F. M. and La Leike, F. H. 1973. Individualized Foreign Language Instruction. Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook.
   Grittner and La Leike take the reader through the planning and implementation of establishing an individualized program at a high school in West Bend, Wisconsin.

3. Logan, G. E. 1973. Individualized Foreign Language Learning: An Organic Process. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.
   The author views individualized instruction as a continuously growing process that is based on "an attitude and an approach to learning", not on any program. The book describes and gives sample materials from the German program at Live Oak High School, in Morgan Hill, California.

II. What role should the basic text play?

The basic text is the skeleton of any course. For the instructor it provides continuity, guidance, and focus in the course, and for the students it provides a base from which to launch their further explorations into the various roots and branches that relate to second-language learning and teaching. Without a basic text the instructor runs the risk of wandering off course; the students may lose track of the unifying threads needed to comprehend the field as a whole; and both are required to seek and find piecemeal bits of information in various places.

Of course, no text is complete in and of itself. The text provides the skeleton, but the meat is put on through the following:

1. Lecture--The instructor uses lectures to supplement areas in the text that are inadequate or to clarify those points that may not be clear to the students. Lectures also provide an efficient means of introducing the students to new trends and ideas that have arisen since the text was published.

2. Discussion--One danger in methods classes is that the instructor may assume that novices have the background to understand concepts that actually may be totally incomprehensible to them. Student discussion of content and reactions to the ideas contained in the reading assist in evaluating whether or not true comprehension has taken place. Too, the interchange of impressions helps students to clarify their understanding and sharpen their thinking.

3. Demonstrations--Unfortunately, students may be unable to see the connection between ideas presented in the text and actual classroom practices and techniques. This is the point at which demonstrations serve a most useful and practical purpose. These demonstrations can be conducted in the same room

as the methods class with either the instructor or a student working with other members of the class.

4. Student Contributions--Although the students may not have any teaching experience themselves, they have all been students. This reservoir of experience from the other side of the desk is a source of invaluable information that is unavailable in any other manner, and the opportunity to share their impressions and experiences with each other adds an extra dimension to what they get out of the course. Of course, student contributions are enhanced even more by the comments of those who have had teaching experience in Sunday School, camp, class, tutoring, etc.

5. Additional Readings--Supplementary readings may cover new developments in the field or any aspect of second-language teaching not covered in the text. The students may be assigned specific materials, they may be asked to become acquainted with certain journals, they may be required to investigate certain topics, or they may be given the freedom to read so many pages in areas of individual interests.

6. Assignments--Reading the chapter is only an initial step in acquiring mastery of the content. Assignments such as preparing drills and/or exercises, interviewing teachers and/or students, critiques, etc. give the students practice in going from discussion to implementation.

7. Projects--Various types of projects from the relatively simple preparation of a bulletin board display or an outline map for their students to complete to the more complex preparation of lesson plans and tests are common and valuable activities in methods classes.

8. Guest speakers--Other speakers as well as other materials offer an extra dimension that is not possible with one instructor. The class may agree to invite a specialist in linguistics, psychology, interaction analysis,

student motivation, group dynamics, etc. to explore his field in greater depth than is possible in a general methods text. Or the class may prefer to hear the ideas and experiences of a master teacher, a guidance counselor, a principal, or a student.

9. Films--Usually, the state department of education and/or nearby university film libraries have films dealing with second-language teaching. There are especially good films demonstrating audio-lingual techniques.

10. Micro Teaching--Toward the end of the course the students should be ready to teach a small segment of material. They may teach their classmates or a small group of volunteer high school students. Obviously, students who do not already know the language are more realistic examples of the problems and difficulties with which real teachers have to cope, but teaching peers is also a valuable experience. Taping the micro teaching for immediate viewing adds considerably to the potential for change of behavior. Helpful criticisms can also be elicited from classmates. Their insight adds an important dimension to the instructor's comments.

11. Simulation--Simulated classroom situations can be developed. The students read, or listen, to them and then discuss possible procedures for solving the problems presented. For example, the instructor might describe a typical classroom situation such as a student not doing his homework during study time. The class then provides a variety of possible courses of action the teacher might follow. Any classroom situation is a potential scene for a simulation exercise. If the instructor does not have time to prepare the exercises, the students can write them. (They should know as much about such as the instructor!)

12. Role Playing--The same scenes that serve as the basis for simulation can also serve as stimuli for role playing activities. An interesting one in

this day of the scarcity of positions is to ask the students to play the role of principal and job candidate during an interview. During the conversation the job candidate is expected to defend the study of languages and to convince the principal that he or she could accomplish these goals in his or her classes.

13. Samples of Student Work--Lesson plans, tests, textbook evaluations, drills, classroom activities, bulletin board displays, cultural units, audio-visual aids, etc. etc. from previous semesters can provide the example needed to get the students started in the right direction even when the text and/or the instructor's directions may not do so.

14. Textbooks--Elementary language textbooks contain ready-made examples of most of the do's and don't's mentioned in class. Students familiar with these published materials are not only better prepared to select textbooks, they are also mor knowledgeable regarding the variety of exercises and drills that have been used in the past.

III. Are there viable alternatives to using a basic text?

Of course, but a course without a basic text is more difficult for the instructor to organize and for the students to manage, i.e., to obtain the materials for convenient study and review. Having to hunt for the readings takes time away from reading and studying the content.

IV. What standard study resources are there?

A. For the Methods Teacher

1. The annual ACTFL review of foreign-language education
2. The ACTFL bibliography
3. ERIC reports
4. Education Index
5. Education Digest
6. Reviews in language-teaching journals

7. Advertisements in language-teaching journals

8. Language-teaching journals

   a. Methodology

      1. Foreign Language Annals

      2. Modern Language Journal

      3. Canadian Modern Language Review

      4. Northeast Conference reports

      5. Journals of the various language groups

   b. Linguistics

      1. International Review of Applied Linguistics

      2. Language Learning

9. Journal of Educational Psychology

10. Journal of Educational Research

11. Options and Perspectives: A Source Book of Innovative Foreign Language Programs in Action K-12. eds. Love and Honig

B. For the Methods Students

1. The annual ACTFL review

2. Education Digest

3. Language-teaching Journals

4. Bibliography in the text

5. Sample materials

   a. Lesson Plans b. Tests c. LAP's d. Mini-course outlines

   e. Teaching units f. Teaching materials such as those from the ACTFL Materials Center, elementary language texts, or those prepared by students

V. What audio-visual resources are available to the methods instructor?

A. The Bureau of Teaching Materials, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia 23216, has the following:

1. Foreign Language Learning in our Schools
2. In the National Interest Part 1
3. Language Teaching in Context--French
4. Latin--Structural Approach
5. Modern Techniques in Language Teaching
6. Sight and Sound--Media in Foreign Language Teaching (plus one for each language)
7. Spanish Enriches the Elementary Curriculum
8. Teaching Foreign Languages--French, Spanish
9. To Speak with Friends

B. Other state departments and university film distribution centers have similar films.

C. Some language departments are beginning to assemble collections of video tapes of master teachers in action.

VI. What kinds of resources are available from professional organizations?

A. Printed materials such as ACTFL materials list, list of state adopted texts, bibliographies, etc.

B. Visuals such as NEC films and AATSP culture units

C. Consultation services

D. Response to queries or requests for information

E. State, regional, and national meetings as well as professional journals

VII. What types of people can serve as resources for the methods instructor and/or the methods course?

A. Other Faculty Members

1. Second-language Faculty

a. Talk or give a demonstration

b. Teach a model class

c. Present linguistic information

d. Discuss literature or the teaching of literature

2. Education Faculty

a. How to deal with students

1. Interaction 2. Group dynamics 3. Counseling

4. Student characteristics 5. Student teaching experiences

B. High School

1. Administrators

2. Foreign-language Supervisors

3. Teachers

4. Counselors

C. Native Speakers in the Community

a. Regarding language learning

b. Regarding linguistic data

D. Audio-visual Person

In short, almost anyone can provide useful information. The problem is scheduling the presentation at a convenient time for the class and the speaker.

VIII. Conclusion

A methods course is an applied, interdisciplinary course. The term "applied" implies the application of theory to classroom instruction, and the term "interdisciplinary" implies the extrapolation of information

from a variety of related fields. Nelson Brooks referred to such a specialist in second-language learning and teaching as a "languist". Whatever the terminology, the knowledge needed by an applied linguist-methodologist requires an enormous depth and breadth of information. Since no one can master everything, utilizing the previously presented resources is a practical solution for filling the gaps in individual preparation and preference.